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209
DIGITAL
EDITION

SPAWN®



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SZYMON
KUDRANSKI



PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

After a heated discussion, Spawn sends Twitch a message by dropping him off the side of a building. Moments later, he revives him to gain answers about his costume and Al Simmons.

While knocked out, Twitch has a brief conversation with his deceased son Max, who warns him about the dangers of Bludd.

Back at the hospital, Rowand is treated like a suspect in the wake of the sadistic nurse's suicide. Unfortunately, a gruesome discovery in the nurse station's closet, doesn't fair well for maintaining his innocence.

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I'VE
ALREADY
SEEN
THIS.

BUT
DO YOU
KNOW
WHAT IT
IS?

YEAH--
SOME CRAPPY
FURNITURE.

NO.

IT'S A
THRONE.

HIS
THRONE.



AND THESE ALLEYS-- THEY WERE HIS HOME.

WHAT?

YOU'RE TELLING ME HE LIVED HERE?

FULL-TIME?

YES.



I KNOW.

IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE.



WHY WOULD HE DO THAT? IF HE HAD THE SAME POWERS I DO, WHY COULDN'T HE USE THOSE TO HIS ADVANTAGE?



BECAUSE HE DIDN'T HAVE A CHOICE.



THERE'S ALWAYS A CHOICE.

BELIEVE ME-- I TOLD HIM THAT AT LEAST A DOZEN TIMES. BUT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN.

HE WAS ALWAYS TORTURING HIMSELF EMOTIONALLY.



SO HE WASN'T ALL THERE MENTALLY. FINE--WHATEVER. BUT SOMEONE WAS AFRAID OF HIM. OTHERWISE WHY KILL HIM?

YOU TELL ME.

UNH?

WAS IT YOU? DID YOU KILL AL?



NO.

AT LEAST AS FAR AS I KNOW.

WHAT THE HELL IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

IT MEANS I'M STILL LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, SINCE I CAN'T RECALL A **GODDAMN THING** ABOUT MY PAST! SO--DID I KILL YOUR FRIEND?

NO! NOT THAT I REMEMBER. WE'LL JUST HAVE TO LEAVE IT AT THAT.

INSTEAD, YOU'D BETTER START GIVING ME SOMETHING, BECAUSE SO FAR ALL YOU'VE DONE IS STALL AND I'M ABOUT TO GET **PISSED OFF!** YOU UNDERSTAND?

YEAH. WE'VE ALREADY ESTABLISHED WHO HAS THE POWER HERE.*

THEN TELL ME ABOUT SIMMONS.



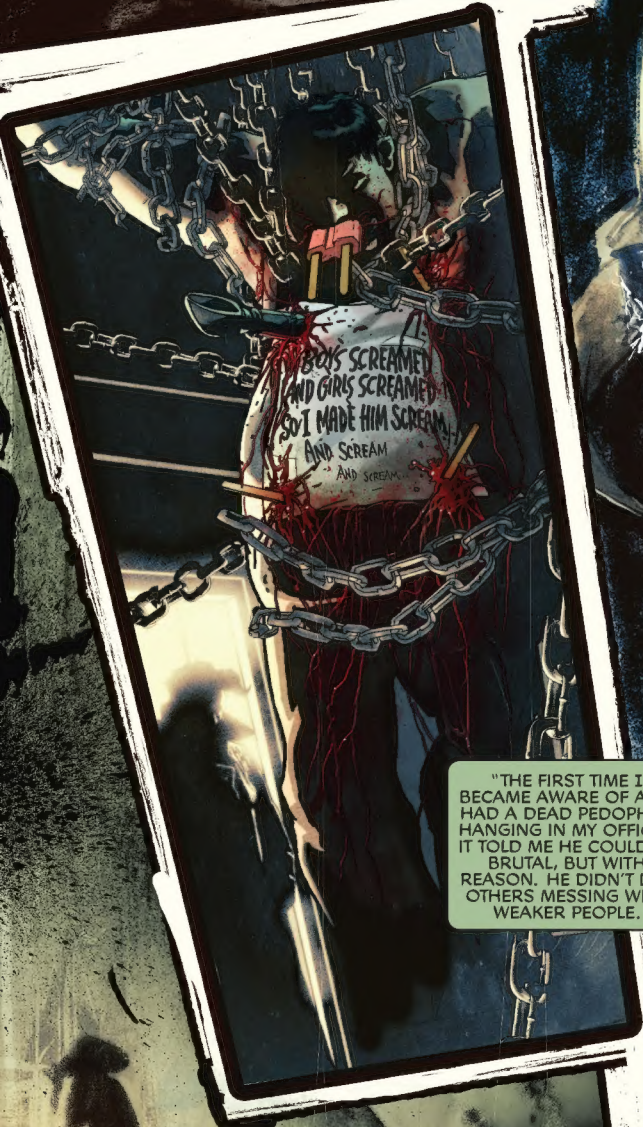
FINE. ON ONE CONDITION.

YOU'RE IN NO POSITION TO BARGAIN.

AND NEITHER ARE YOU! SO YOU WANT ANSWERS, THEN YOU'RE GOING TO DO ME A FAVOR AFTERWARDS.

DEPENDS ON HOW GOOD YOUR STORY IS.

OH, IT'S A GOOD ONE...



"THE FIRST TIME I BECAME AWARE OF AL, I HAD A DEAD PEDOPHILE HANGING IN MY OFFICE*. IT TOLD ME HE COULD BE BRUTAL, BUT WITH REASON. HE DIDN'T LIKE OTHERS MESSING WITH WEAKER PEOPLE."

*Way back in issue 5--Todd



"THAT'S WHY HE PROTECTED THE HOMELESS WHO ROAMED THESE ALLEYS. BECAUSE HE FELT LIKE THEY'D BEEN DUMPED ON ENOUGH. OR PERHAPS HE TOOK COMFORT IN BEING AROUND OTHER LOST SOULS."

"WHATEVER DROVE HIM, HE COULDN'T ESCAPE HIS PAST. AS A COVERT OPERATOR FOR THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, HE WAS TRAINED TO KILL WITH PRECISION. AND LIKE A GOOD SOLDIER, HE DID IT WITHOUT QUESTION FOR YEARS. BUT SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE HE BEGAN TO ASK QUESTIONS. AND WHEN HE DID--THEY SIMPLY KILLED HIM."

"BUT SOMEHOW HE CHEATED DEATH--FOR A PRICE. YEARS LATER HE RETURNED TO EARTH AS A SPAWN. CONFUSED, DAZED. A MAN WITH NO PLACE TO GO, JUST LIKE YOU ARE NOW. AND INSTEAD OF FINDING PEACE OR GETTING BACK TO THE WOMAN HE LOVED, HIS LIFE WAS A CONSTANT WAR."



"SO HE FOUGHT BACK. DOING WHATEVER HE NEEDED TO SHOW THEM HE WAS GOING TO BE HIS OWN MAN. THAT NO ONE WAS EVER GOING TO CONTROL HIM AGAIN."



"THAT'S WHEN I MET HIM FACE TO FACE."




"AND LIKE YOU RIGHT NOW, I DIDN'T TRUST HIM EITHER. HE WAS ARROGANT, COCKY, AND ACTED STUPID AS HELL."

TOP SECRET

"BUT OVER TIME--DESPITE THE CONSTANT STRUGGLE OVER ALL THE MADNESS AND CHAOS THAT HAD BECOME HIS LIFE--HE SHOWED ME THAT HE WAS A MAN OF INTEGRITY AND CONVICTION. AND MOST IMPORTANTLY WAS WILLING TO STAND UP FOR OTHERS."




"WHETHER IT WAS AGAINST THOSE HE USED TO WORK FOR OR SOME SUPER-NATURAL FORCE, THEY ALL CAME AT HIM. RELENTLESSLY."




"SO WAS HE A KILLER? YES.
DID HE MURDER OTHERS
FOR THE GREATER CAUSE OF
SOME SUPPOSED AMERICAN
LIBERTY AND FREEDOM? YES.

"BUT IN THE END HE
REGRETTED THOSE ACTIONS
WHEN HE LEARNED HIS SIDE WAS
AS MANIPULATIVE AND POWER
CRAZED AS THE ENEMIES.

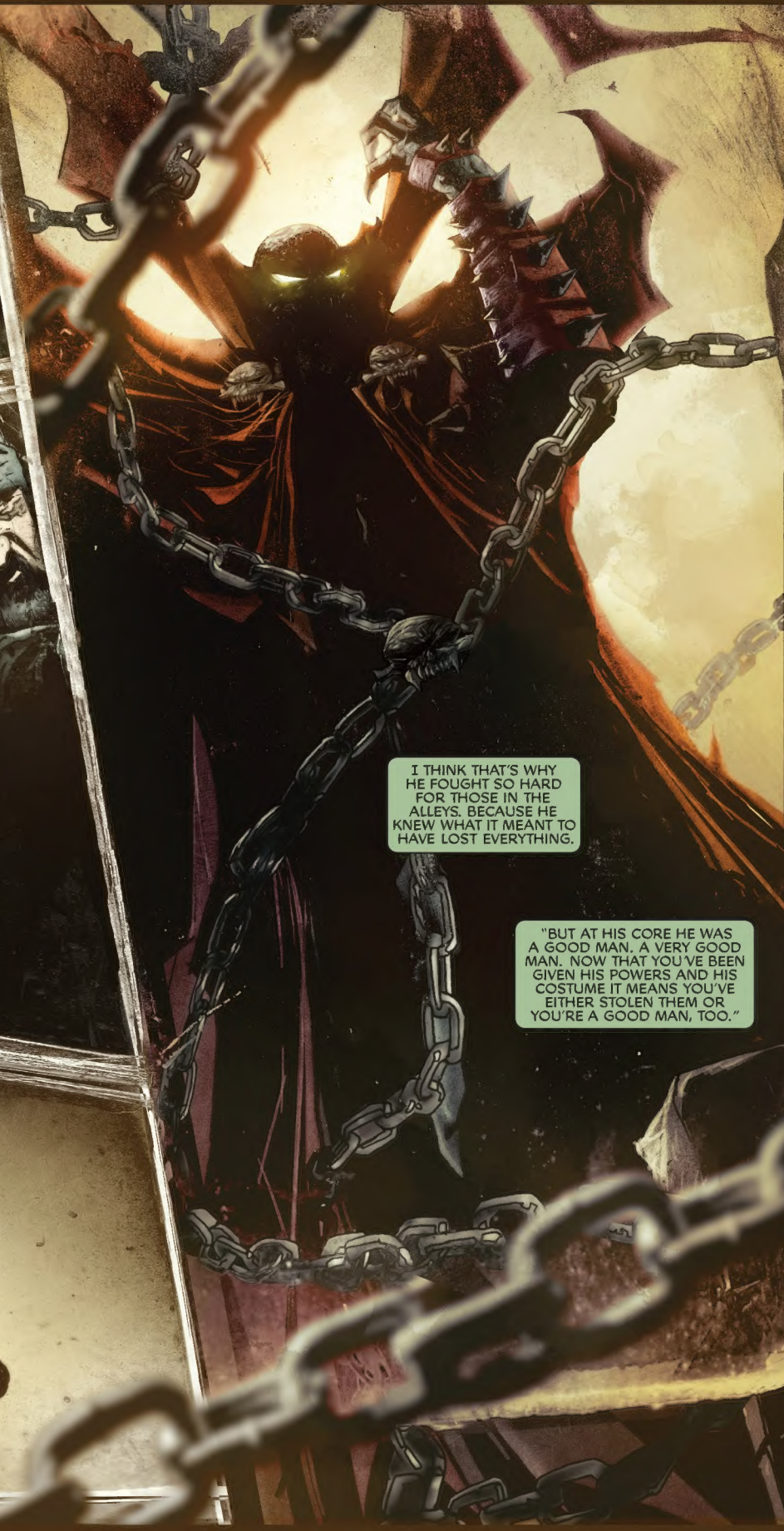


"THAT'S PART OF THE REASON
HE ISOLATED HIMSELF FROM THE
WORLD. HE WAS RACKED WITH
GUILT, SO HE DECIDED THAT INSTEAD
OF BOWING TO THE WISHES OF
HEAVEN OR HELL OR ANY HUMAN--
HE'D FIGHT FOR HIS OWN PERSONAL
FREEDOM, AND THAT OF THE
PEOPLE AROUND HIM.



"BECAUSE HE'D
LOST THE ONE
THING THAT
GAVE HIS
EXISTENCE ANY
MEANING.
HIS WIFE.

"THIS DESPITE THE ONLY
REASON FOR HIS EXISTENCE.
THE ONLY REASON HE EVER
WANTED TO RETURN TO EARTH
HAD BEEN TAKEN FROM HIM.

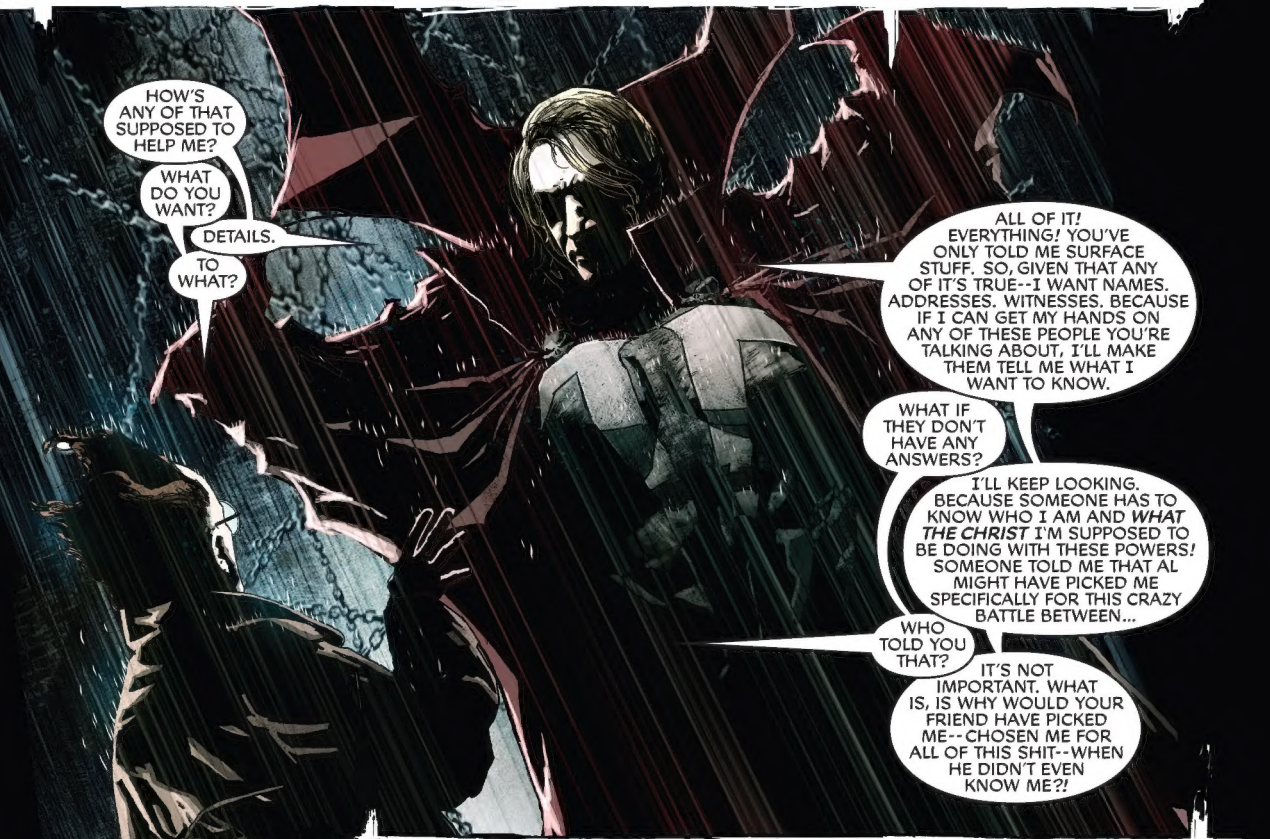


I THINK THAT'S WHY
HE FOUGHT SO HARD
FOR THOSE IN THE
ALLEYS. BECAUSE HE
KNEW WHAT IT MEANT TO
HAVE LOST EVERYTHING.

"BUT AT HIS CORE HE WAS
A GOOD MAN. A VERY GOOD
MAN. NOW THAT YOU'VE BEEN
GIVEN HIS POWERS AND HIS
COSTUME IT MEANS YOU'VE
EITHER STOLEN THEM OR
YOU'RE A GOOD MAN, TOO."



I'D LIKE
TO FIND
OUT WHICH
IT IS.



HOW'S
ANY OF THAT
SUPPOSED TO
HELP ME?

WHAT
DO YOU
WANT?

DETAILS.

TO
WHAT?

ALL OF IT!
EVERYTHING! YOU'VE
ONLY TOLD ME SURFACE
STUFF. SO, GIVEN THAT ANY
OF IT'S TRUE--I WANT NAMES,
ADDRESSES, WITNESSES. BECAUSE
IF I CAN GET MY HANDS ON
ANY OF THESE PEOPLE YOU'RE
TALKING ABOUT, I'LL MAKE
THEM TELL ME WHAT I
WANT TO KNOW.

WHAT IF
THEY DON'T
HAVE ANY
ANSWERS?

I'LL KEEP LOOKING.
BECAUSE SOMEONE HAS TO
KNOW WHO I AM AND **WHAT
THE CHRIST** I'M SUPPOSED TO
BE DOING WITH THESE POWERS!
SOMEONE TOLD ME THAT AL
MIGHT HAVE PICKED ME
SPECIFICALLY FOR THIS CRAZY
BATTLE BETWEEN...

WHO
TOLD YOU
THAT?

IT'S NOT
IMPORTANT. WHAT
IS, IS WHY WOULD YOUR
FRIEND HAVE PICKED
ME-- CHOSEN ME FOR
ALL OF THIS SHIT--WHEN
HE DIDN'T EVEN
KNOW ME?!




HE
WOULDN'T.

WHAT?


YOU THINK I
KNEW HIM?! I'VE
BEEN IN A GOD-
DAMN COMA FOR
THE PAST FIVE
YEARS!! SO STOP
F*@CKING WITH
ME!!



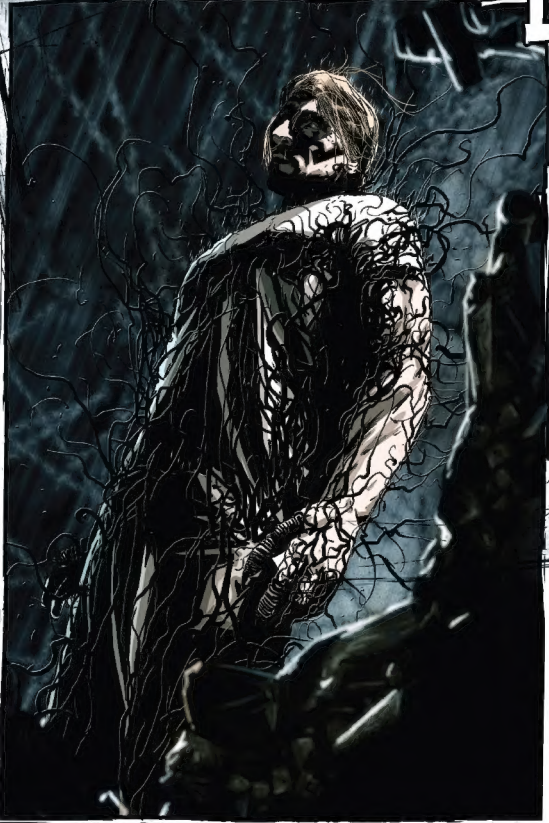
ALRIGHT!
ALRIGHT!
CALM DOWN.



I TOLD YOU I'D
HELP. I'LL MAKE A COPY OF
ALL MY FILES AND BRING THOSE
TO YOU. THEN I CAN USE THE POLICE
DATABASE TO SEE IF ANY OF WHAT
YOU KNOW, ALONG WITH WHAT I
KNOW, HAS ANY OVERLAP. WE'LL START
THERE FIRST. IF I HAVE TO I'LL KNOCK
ON EVERY DOOR OF ANYONE
THAT'S EVER BEEN NEAR
YOU OR AL.



DOES
THAT WORK
FOR YOU?



OKAY.

YOU SAID
SOMETHING
ABOUT WANTING
A FAVOR FROM
ME?

I DID.

I NEED YOU
TO HELP ANOTHER
FRIEND OF MINE.
DO THAT AND
YOU CAN KILL ME
WHenever YOU
FEEL LIKE IT.

THAT'S
SOME KIND
OF FRIEND.
WHERE
IS HE?

IN THE
HOSPITAL
DYING.



YOU
DON'T SEEM
SCARED AT WHAT
YOU'RE SEEING,
DETECTIVE.

SADLY,
I'VE SEEN IT
BEFORE. WHEN
DID YOU KILL
THESE?

LAST
NIGHT.



Forty minutes later.





I'LL DEAL
WITH THAT LATER.
FIRST I WANT TO
CHECK MY...



JESUS!



THIS
ISN'T
GOOD.

LOOK--
I NEED TO GET
INSIDE. NOW! I
THINK SOMETHING
MAY HAVE
HAPPENED TO MY
FRIEND AND THE
STATION'S BEEN TRYING
TO...

WHAT'S
HIS NAME?

Hunh?

YOUR
FRIEND.
WHAT'S
HIS NAME?

SAM.
WHY'RE YOU
ASKING?

THOSE POLICE
CARS-- THEY
HAVE SOMETHING
TO DO WITH SAM
DON'T THEY?

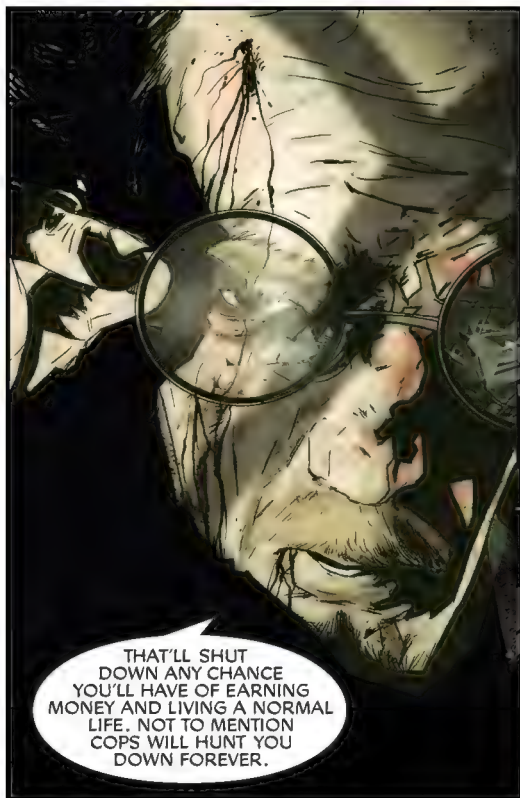
I DON'T KNOW--
MAYBE-- BUT I'VE GOT
TO GO INSIDE. WE'LL JUST
PUT MY PLAN ON HOLD UNTIL
I KNOW IT'S SAFE FOR
YOU. SO-- HERE'S OUR
MOMENT OF TRUTH. I HOPE
YOU'LL STILL BE HERE
WHEN I GET BACK.

WHEN
WILL THAT
BE?

I DON'T
KNOW! WHEN
I'M DONE! JUST
STAY OUT OF
SIGHT.

AND
WHAT
HAPPENS IF
I'M NOT
HERE?

THEN I'LL
PHONE EVERY
MEDIA OUTLET I CAN,
AND TELL THEM YOU'RE
ACTUALLY A **SADISTIC
KILLER**-- NOT THE
ROMANTIC FAITH HEALER
THEY'RE MAKING YOU
OUT TO BE.

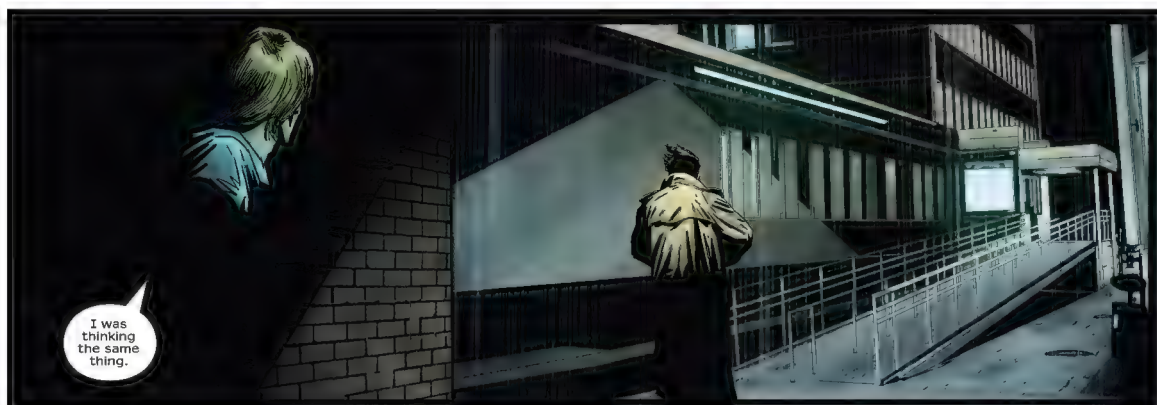


THAT'LL SHUT
DOWN ANY CHANCE
YOU'LL HAVE OF EARNING
MONEY AND LIVING A NORMAL
LIFE. NOT TO MENTION
COPS WILL HUNT YOU
DOWN FOREVER.

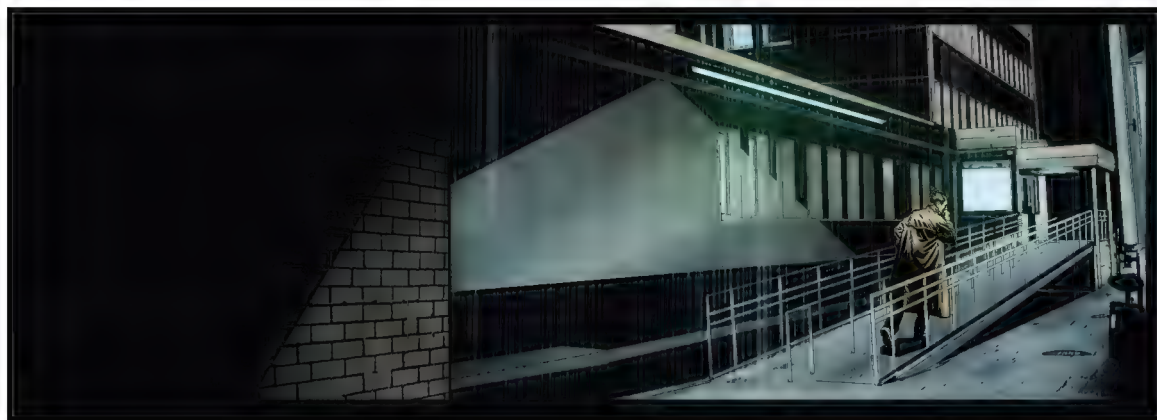


SO DO
THE RIGHT
THING.

AND
DON'T
MAKE ME
REGRET
THIS.



I was
thinking
the same
thing.







DETECTIVE WILLIAMS?



I THOUGHT THAT MIGHT BE YOU.

WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO CONTACT YOU, AND I'M SURE YOUR VIRGINIA FRIEND ROWAND HAS, TOO. WE'D LIKE TO CORROBORATE A FEW FACTS WITH YOU IF WE CAN.

WE ONLY NEED A BIT OF YOUR TIME FOR A FEW QUESTIONS...

IS IT SAM? IS HE STILL ALIVE?

YEAH, YEAH. HE'S FINE.

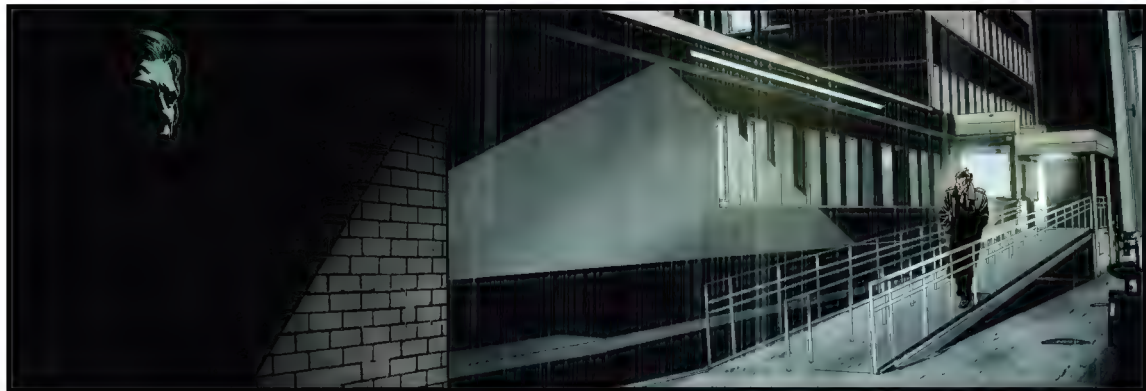
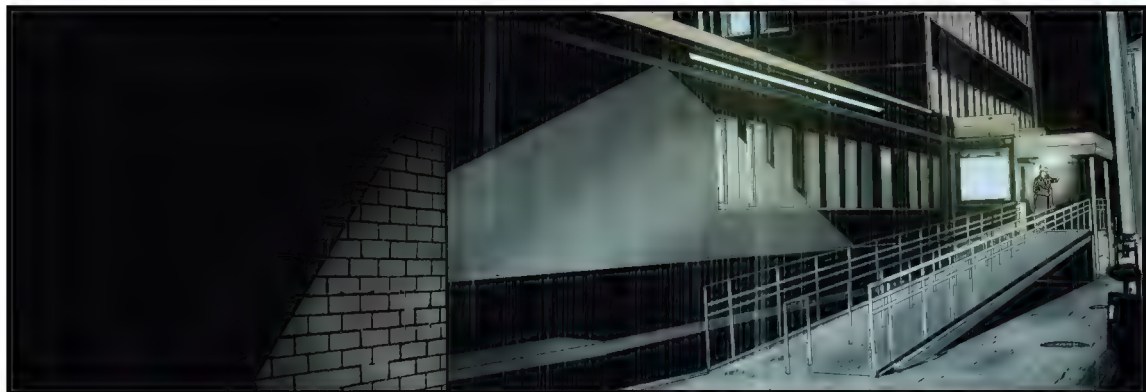


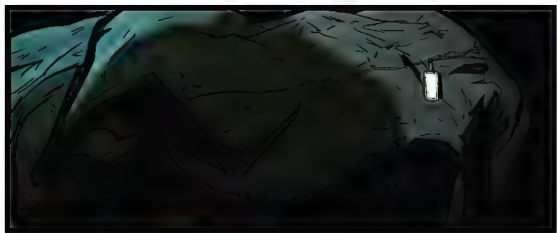
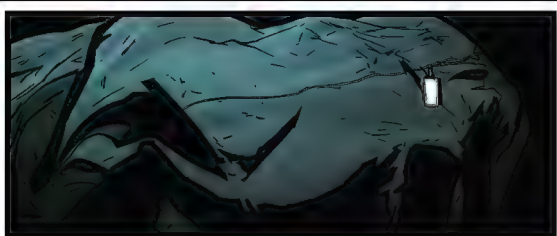
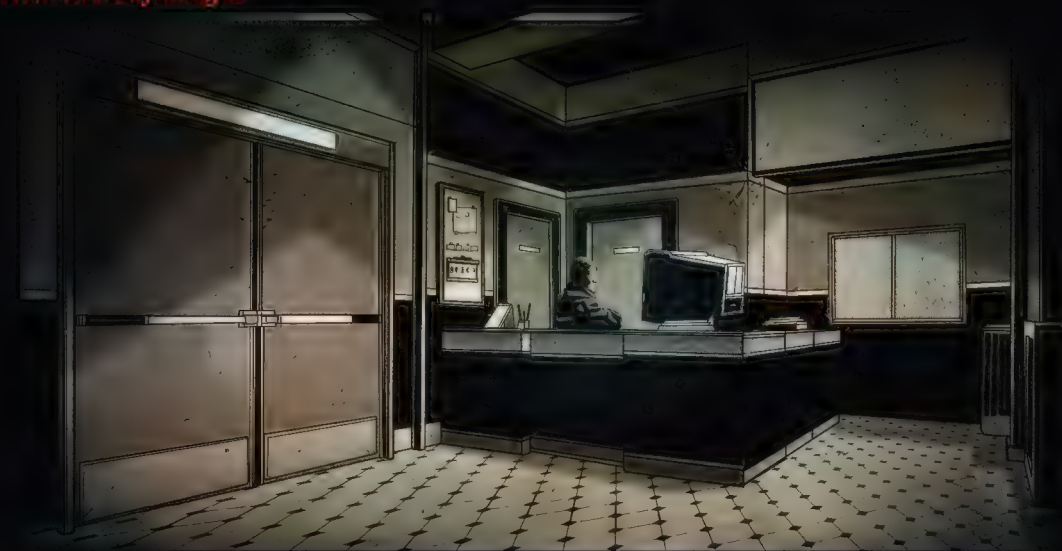
BUT IT APPEARS HE MAY HAVE BEEN THE TARGET OF SOME--LET'S SAY--UNUSUAL ACTIVITIES BY ONE OF THE NURSES, THOUGH WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO PIECE IT ALL TOGETHER YET. AND BEFORE YOU ASK, THE NURSE COMMITTED SUICIDE BEFORE WE GOT HERE. THE ONLY ONE THAT HAD CONTACT WITH HER BEFORE WE ARRIVED WAS DETECTIVE ROWAND.

AND SO FAR HIS STORY IS A LITTLE TOUGH TO SWALLOW.

A SUICIDE? WHY SO MANY SQUAD CARS OUTSIDE THEN?

BECAUSE I'VE ALSO GOT EIGHT DEAD BODIES. ALL HOSPITAL STAFF. LET'S STEP INTO A ROOM AND I CAN FILL YOU IN.







YOU
DUMB
BITCH.

WAKE
UP!

WE
NEED TO
TALK.



Gasp!

I GAVE
YOU ONE
SIMPLE TASK.
ONE JOB!

TO KEEP
THE FAT
DETECTIVE
IN HIS BED.
THAT WAS
ALL.*

A
STRANGER...
CAME IN.



DON'T
GIVE ME
EXCUSES!

YOU'VE NO
IDEA WHAT'S AT
STAKE HERE! IF YOU
DID--YOU'D HAVE
BEEN **MUCH MORE**
DISCREET.

I'M GROWING
SICK OF YOUR
GAMES, CLOWN. ALWAYS
PLANNING. ALWAYS
WAITING.



IT'S NOT
A GAME!
NONE OF THIS IS!
THAT'S WHY YOU KEEP
MAKING MISTAKES--
BECAUSE YOU
KEEP FORGETTING
THAT!

AND
I'M JUST
ABOUT
OUT OF
PATIENCE
WITH
YOU.

YOU'RE
NOT MY
MASTER.

YOU KEEP
FORGETTING THAT!
I DEAL WITH THINGS
THE WAY AN
EMPRESS OF HELL
SHOULD.



WERE.

YOU WERE
AN EMPRESS.
NOT ANY MORE!
THE SOONER YOU
FIGURE THAT OUT
THE BETTER
WE'LL ALL BE.

AND
YOU'RE
WRONG!
**I AM YOUR
MASTER!** IN
THIS WORLD,
AT LEAST. OR
HAVE YOU ALSO
FORGOTTEN
HOW I
SAVED
YOU?

I
REMEMBER.

GOOD!
BECAUSE YOU PULL
ANOTHER STUNT LIKE YOU
DID TONIGHT AND I'LL FEED
YOU TO THE DOGS. I RECRUITED
YOU FOR A PURPOSE, WHICH
WAS TO STAND WATCH OVER
DETECTIVE BURKE. HE'S HIDING
SOMETHING FROM US.
SOMETHING THE FORCES
OF HELL WANT.

AND IF THEY
FIND IT--THEY WON'T
HESITATE COMING AFTER
EITHER OF US BECAUSE
WE'VE BECOME TRAITORS
TO THEM! SO IF YOU HOPE
TO SURVIVE--I NEED
YOUR LOYALTY.



DO
I HAVE
THAT?



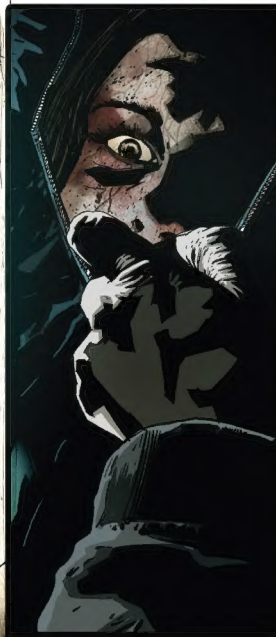
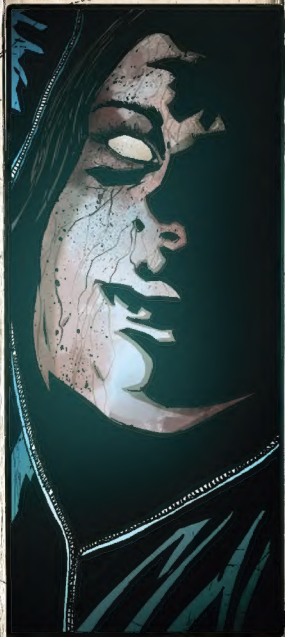
YES.

FOR
NOW.



I'LL
TAKE
THAT.

BUT
FIRST WE NEED
TO CORRECT ONE
THING. THIS BODY
YOU'RE IN--IT'S RUN
ITS COURSE. IT'S
NO LONGER USEFUL.
SO LIE BACK. I'LL
RETURN WITH A
MORE SUITABLE
ONE.



AND
WAIT
UNTIL YOU
SEE WHO I
HAVE IN
MIND.





Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE